BIRTH

842 847 Except in some of the economically poorest areas any increase of the family was a cause for joy- in the country not just for the immediate family, but for the whole village. However, boys were greatly preferred, especially among the mountaineers, the birth of a girl being something of a disappointment. Among the Kartvelian mountaineers, female infanticide still occurred in the nineteenth century; the Khevsur and Pshav practiced birth control mainly by abortion, no couple being allowed to have their first child until the third year of marriage, the second after seven years, while the third must be the last. During menstruation and childbirth the Khevsur women were considered unclean and were banished to special huts (called samrevlo) outside the village. 841 844

551 The names given to children are now mostly those usual in Christian and Islamic countries, though the older custom of giving animal names to boys and terms of affection to girls has not died out, especially among the highlanders.

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595 (1) Custom permits *all* North Caucasians and their neighbours, whether Christian or Mohammedan, to marry more than one wife. The Tartars near the city of Derbend in the eighteenth century are the only exception, but even in this single case, it ist not certain whether they were monogamists *de jure* or only *de facto*.

[177] (2) Everywhere polygyny is *pre-Islamic*, even if previous to their conversion to Islamism the particular tribe happened to be Christian. We might rightly, therefore, inquire into the possible origin of polygyny in the Caucasus. Polygyny, if borrowed at all, was not borrowed as an *isolated* institution. On the contrary, it seems to be a North Caucasian possession, first of all, as old as the practice [594] of levirate (*infra*, pp. 71—75). Furthermore, it seems to be a North Caucasian cultural possession as old as the economic, social, and religious structure of the [614] North Caucasian family itself. Here we understand "family" in its broad sense, including the joint-family and sib. We cannot now describe this family structure in detail. Briefly, by "the economic, social, and religious structure of the family" we understand that the family in North Caucasia has been and in many places still is the *raison d'être* of the individual.[304] Whatever the individual does or whatever is done to him or for him has only one aim, the perpetuation and [581] prosperity of the family. Now, in the mind of the North Caucasian, polygyny is an immense asset and at times absolutely indispensable for the economic, social, and religious life of the all-important and solely-important family.

593 *Economically* considered, the wife is extremely important. In the North 562 Caucasus it is the wife who does most of the work (*infra*, pp. 156—159). In fact, sometimes a rich Avar will marry a son to a poor girl or to a widow of a lower class, with whom he is forbidden all communication, in order to have an additional worker in the house.[31] Moreover, a wife is not only a *worker*; she ● 842 is the "*worker-producing*" organ of the family. Even though boys are preferred (*infra*, pp. 159 ff), girls prove to be good and valuable workers and bring in, at times, a large brideprice (*infra*, pp. 82—91). Now, the more wives there are in the household, the more "worker-producing" organs there are, and by that very fact, at least in the mind of the natives, the family becomes so much the more economically healthy and secure.

The *religious* structure of the family may have contributed just as much to [769] the rise of polygyny as did the economic form of life. The most sacred duty of the individual and of the individual family is, or at least has been, to perpetuate itself, and thus to perpetuate the cult of the ancestors. It is a fact throughout North Caucasus that only a *son* can perpetuate the family and prevent the greatest calamity imagineable, its extinction. But a wife is precisely the "*boy-producing*" organ. If this organ is lacking or fails to function the family is doomed. Today one of the main motives for taking a second wife is sterility.[32] Or again, a second wife will be acquired if the first gives birth only to girls.

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[304] According to ancient customary laws.

[31] L'vov, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

[32] Cf. K. Maćavariani, "Nĕkotoryja čerty iz žizni Abchazcev. Položenie ženščiny v Abchazii," SMOMPK, IV (1884), No. 2, p. 42. E. G. Pčelina, "Rodil'nye obyčai u osetin," SE, 1937, No. 4, p. 88.

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587 (4) We must disagree with Kovalevskij in his interpretation of the levirate as a vestige of former group marriage.[20] Without offering us any evidence, he takes up the theories of Morgan and Frazer and applies them to the Caucasus. Such an institution as "group marriage" exists nowhere in the world, and to imagine that it has ever existed is mere fancy. In an attempt to explain the origin of preferential mating in the Caucasus we should lay aside all guesswork [562] and study the culture before us. For example: the unbearably low position of the North Caucasian woman (*infra*, pp. 152—159) may have made her appear as inheritable chattel. After all, the family purchased her, paid a high price for her, and now she constitutes a part of the family property no less than do the horses, cows, and sheep. Moreover, as we have explained above (pp. 44 f), she is more than *ordinary* family property: she is the best family investment, for she is the "worker-producing" and especially the "boy-producing" organ on which depends the economic, religious, and social life of the family. This realization would only too naturally disincline the family to give her up after her husband's [581] death. As we shall see in the following chapter, mating is not a private affair; it is a strictly family affair, the prime purpose of marriage being the good of the family or sib. She, as it were, belongs more to the *family* that purchased her than to the individual member whose wife she is. Finally, if we consider the pre-Islamic, pre-Christian, and pre-Avestic religion of the mountaineers, we are almost forced to postulate such an institution as widow-inheritance. [725] The life beyond does not differ from the present, and consequently the departed will need his wife in the nether world just as much as in this life. (We shall have occasion to speak of posthumous marriages! Cf. *infra*, p. 85.) We shall even show that suttee was not unknown in North Caucasus (Cf. *infra*, [842] pp. 131 f). The wife therefore must remain in the family. Moreover, the deceased needs offspring, a large progeny, just as much after death as during life, for his happiness and honour in the other world depend upon the cult he receives from his descendents. The widow, therefore, must remain in the family and another member must "raise up seed for his brother" and "build up his brother's house." In other words, the levirate is not a survival of a *primitive* culture but rather an institution very intimately connected with the economic, social and religious life of a relatively highly developed culture such as that of pastoral peoples.

595 As a confirmation of what we have just now said about the origin of [842] Caucasian preferential mating, we wish to describe another institution, still found today in various parts of Caucasus, the so-called *snohačestvo*. A boy-child is married to an adult girl with whom the father may have sexual intercourse as freely as with his own wife. The father is considered as living in lawful concubinage with his son's wife and may do so until the child becomes of age. We wish to stress that this practice is a perfect parallel to widow inheritance. The father "must raise seed" for his son and "build up his house" till he is himself able to do so. The children born of this concubinage belong to the childhusband, sometimes half to him and half to the progenitor. This is

[20] Kovalevskij, *Coutume contemp.*, p. 181.

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Chapter VII

The Wedding

§ 1. DESCRIPTION

The NORTHWESTERN CAUCASIANS. The finest descriptions of the Abkhazian wedding, to my mind, are those of Deržavin and Seidlitz.[1] Unless indicated, our data have been taken from the latter author.

On the appointed day the bridegroom and his attendants hasten to the home of the bride, and after having extended them a hearty welcome, her father solemnly hands her over to the groom. A procession is formed, which then proceeds towards the bride's new home. The Abkhazian bridal song, "Bedniera" ("Happiness"), and continuous pistol salutes fill the air as the horsemen suddenly break into a wild gallop and begin their famous Caucasian *dzhigirt* (riding stunts).

As soon as the wedding procession nears the groom's house, one of the riders gallops ahead. A pistol salute lets all know that the bride is near.

As soon as she reaches the house, an immense round loaf of millet bread is tossed over her head three times, then broken, and eaten by all present.

A bridal arch is formed at the doorway of the house by two men with crossed swords. On the threshold she is given some sugar and honey with the words "May God grant you a tongue as sweet as sugar and honey."[2]

She then crosses the threshold and receives a dish of *ghomi* (millet) and an egg. What the significance of this ceremony may be we are not told. She is then led thrice round the hearth, scattering grains of millet in all directions.

The bride then sits down and a little boy is brought to her. She takes him on her lap, in order that she too may, before long, have the happiness of becoming the mother of a boy.[3]

After this ceremony she is taken to the *amhara* (little house or hut).

On the following day visitors arrive to become acquainted with the bride[4] and to offer her various gifts. An attendant is always at her side to introduce the guests as they come. The veil is lifted from her face as she stands before the visitor motionless, with downcast eyes, and not uttering a single word. If

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[1] N. C. Deržavin, "Iz oblasti kavkazskoj etnografii. Svad'ba v Abchazii," SMOMPK, XXXVI (1906), No. 2, pp. 1—10. N. von Seidlitz, "Die Abchasen," *Globus*, LXVI (1894), No. 3, pp. 40 f. See also Dubrovin's description, *Istorija*, I, ii, pp. 49 ff.

[2] It is most likely the mother of the household who invites the bride to cross the threshold, a custom found also among other peoples of North Caucasus.

[3] Cf. *infra*, p. 205.

[4] Deržavin, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

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The village children accompany her and then throw stones at the shrine, crying, "So many boys (as these missiles) and one blue-eyed girl grant thou, Mairem, to this our dear bride!" The groomsman must then repeat this prayer.[90]

(7) The Ossetes also have the corset-ceremony *(supra,* p. 113). The groom must *untie* the knots and not cut them.[91]

(8) The best-man takes the bride by the hand and walks round the fireplace three times, each time striking the chain with his sword.[92]

(9) The mother-in-law gives the bride some honey.[93]

(10) Feasting lasts two full days and longer. The wedding is elaborate and expensive.[94]

(11) The proof of virginity is rigorously insisted upon.[95]

(12) The bride receives gifts from her own father and guests.[96]

(13) The groomsman drives evil spirits away by holding a club over the bride's head.[97]

And now, a word about the neighbouring TURKS. The Kumykian marriage hardly differs from that of the Lesghians.[98] The dramatization of bride capture is found, for example, among the Karachai[99] and Nogai;[100] the fireplace ceremony is found as far south as the Kurds;[101] some Tartars have the custom of placing a boy on the bride's lap.[102]

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[90] Baddeley, *op. cit.*, I, p. 158. See *infra*, p. 205.
E. G. Pčelina, "Rodil'nye obyčai u Osetin," SE, 1937, No. 4, p. 86.

[91] Baddeley, *op. cit.*, I, p. 270. Older writers speak of *cutting* the knots, e. g., Klaproth, *Voyage au Mont Caucase et en Géorgie*, II, p. 250.

[92] Kovalevskij, *Costume contemp.*, pp. 49, 170 f; Gatiev, *op. cit.*, pp. 18 f; Dubrovin, *Istorija*, I, i, p. 325.

[93] Baddeley, *op. cit.*, I, p. 268.

[94] Leontovič, II, pp. 51, § 18, *note* 4. The military government tried to limit the number of guests from 120 to 15. Cf. Dirr, AGKB, p. 113.

[95] Klaproth, *op. cit.*, II, p. 249.

[96] Kovalevskij, *Costume contemp.*, pp. 198 f.

[97] Kovalevskij, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

[98] Dubrovin, *Istorija*, I, i, p. 638.

[99] Jankó, *Néprajzi* etc. Zichy's *Kaukazusi és középázsiai utazásai*, p. 44.

[100] Dubrovin, *Istorija*, I, i, pp. 278 f. In Balkaria the best-man enters the bride's home to fetch the bride, but as soon as he enters the house the women present defend the bride by trying to cut the best-man's cherkeska (Caucasian outer garment), see N. A. Karaulov, "Bolkari na Kavkaze," SMOMPK, XXXVIII (1908), No. 1, p. 146.

[101] Jankó, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

[102] Mir-Galim-bek-Vezirov, *Několko svědění o Tatarskich pover'jach*," SMOMPK, IX (1890), No. 2, p. 11.
For a full description of a Kumykian wedding see: N. Semenov, "Očerki narodnych obyčaev, Kumykov Terskoj Oblasti," *Terskij Sbornik*, II (1892), No. 2, Part 2, pp. 71 ff.
For Nogai wedding see: Dubrovin, *Istorija*, I, i, pp. 277 ff.
For wedding of the Turkomans see: A. A. Volodin, "Truchmenskaja step i truchmeny," SMOMPK, XXXVIII (1908), No. 1, pp. 45—49.

TABLE 16

Marriage Ceremonies of N. Caucasians And

Marriage Ceremonies	Procession			Dramatization of capture	Horse-racing	Both sibs (families) present	Groom absent for large part of wedding	Segregation of bride during wedding	Bride's submission to husband	Wedding elaborate, expensive with much feasting & dancing	Mother-in-law †			Corset ceremony	Proof of Virginity	Child placed on bride's lap	Special wishes for boys
	From groom's house to bride	Return with bride to groom's house	Groom is absent								Invites bride to cross threshold	Offers bride some honey	Bride's submission to				
Abkhaz	+	+	–		+	+		+		+	+	+		+		+	+
Cherkess	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+		+	+	+	+
Ingushi	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+		+			?	+	+
Other Chechens	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+		+				+	+
Avars	+	+	+	+		+	+		+	+	+	+	+		+		
Dargwa	+	+	+	+		+	+		+	+	+	+	+		+		
Other Lesghians	+	+	+	+		+	+		+	+	+	+	+		+		
Khevsurs	+	+		+		+									+		
Pshavs *	+	+	–			+				+	+	+			+		+
Tushi												+					
Ingiloi	+	+													+		
Ossetes	+	+		+		+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+		+	+
Karachai				+													

* Cf. Makalatija. "Iz starogo narodnogo byta Pšavov," SE, 1938, No. 1, pp. 105.

585 [583] [526] [506] [842]

Fire-place ceremony	Gifts to bride from own sib	"Tramping on bed" ceremony	Sword placed over bride's head	Special attendant for groom	Special attendant for bride	Mother plays important rôle	Maternal uncle important rôle	Formal religious contract	Reconciliation ceremony	Predominant Character of Ceremonies
+	+	−	+		+	−	−	+		Pastoral
+	+	−	+	+	+	−	−	+	+	Pastoral
+	+	−		+	+	−	−	+		Pastoral
?	+	−		+	+	−	−	+		Pastoral
?	+	+		+	+	+	−	+		Pastoral + Agrarian
?	+	+		+	+	+	−	+		Pastoral + Agrarian
	+	+		+	+	+	−	+		Pastoral + Agrarian
+		−				+	−	+		Pastoral + Agrarian
+	+	−		+	+	+	−	+		Pastoral + Agrarian
							+	+		
						+	−			
+	+	−	+	+	+	−	−	+		Pastoral

? It is usually the mother-in-law.

581 764 Caucasus clearly shows that the peoples of North Caucasia believed that a marriage tie could continue in the next world. However, since we do not have the slightest evidence that suttee was *obligatory*, the most we can say is that *perhaps*, at one time, death could not dissolve marriage.

2. Levirate

581 587 Once an Ossetine woman was married, she was considered bound to her husband forever unless divorced, as is evident from the following remarkable facts. (1) The widow was not allowed to marry outside her husband's family; the father or brother or son of the deceased man was obliged to take her to wife, but this second marriage was considered merely a *continuation* of the first. (2) The children of the second marriage were regarded as the sons and daughters of the *deceased*. (3) The children received the name of the deceased. (4) If the [589] widow had no brother-in-law, father-in-law or step-son, she had to remain unmarried, or live in concubinage, the children born becoming the sons and daughters of the deceased, even the legal heirs of the deceased. The marriage and concubinage had only one purpose: to "raise seed" and "build up the house" of the deceased till the wife would once again join him in the other world. These facts seem to be sufficient proof for the indissolubility of marriage even by death! Unfortunately, we do not have such details about the ancient levirate of the other peoples living in the Caucasus. However, when treating of preferential mating we did find obligatory levirate among the Ingushi and came to the conclusion that most probably the levirate was formerly obligatory also among the other mountain tribes.[8] In a word, it is quite *possible* that at one time death did not dissolve a marital bond.

§ 2. BY DIVORCE

586 The *adats* of all mountain peoples of Caucasus permit divorce. When speaking of divorce we must make a very clear distinction between the rights of the *husband* and those of the *wife*, between a *valid* divorce and a *justifiable* divorce.

[842] The NORTHWESTERN CAUCASIANS. According to reports of the eigtheenth century, a wife might be desmissed in Abkhazia if she were "sterile," that is, if she did not give birth to a child before she was 30, or if she remained childless for five successive years.[9] However, a *valid* divorce is possible at will. The Temirgoi, for example, may divorce their wives "if they do not please their husbands."[10] Such is the case throughout Abkhazia and among the Cherkess today.[11] Although formerly the women in Northwest Caucasus were at a very great disadvantage in regard to divorce, today, they too may abandon their husbands without any special legal grounds. However, in such arbitrary

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[8] Cf. *supra*, p. 73.
[9] Reineggs, *op. cit.*, Part II, p. 9.
[10] Vasil'kov, "Očerk byta Temirgoevcev," SMOMPK, XXIX (1901), p. 101.
[11] Cf. Ladvlenskij, FT, p. 199.

586 of a husband never justifies a wife to divorce him.[21] In fact, the inequality was
837 even far greater: although a husband's wilful act of adultery was not sufficient grounds for a divorce, rape suffered by an innocent wife was.[22] Other legal
[842] grounds for a divorce were sterility of the wife or the fact that she was "capable" of giving birth only to girls,[23] which is but another form of "sterility."

586 A divorcée has no right to a special alimony. Instead, she has her own personal property and especially her *kebin*.[24]

If a wife abandons her husband for any reason other than the few legal grounds granted her, she not only must return all engagement and wedding gifts received from her husband, but her family must also return the entire *kalym*. In fact, she may not re-marry till the *kalym* is refunded. Sometimes the husband out of mere malice refuses the *kalym*, so that the divorcée must remain unmarried for the rest of her life.[25]

[427] The children remain in the father's household, even if he should soon die after the divorce,[26] the guardianship always remaining in the male line.

According to Lesghian customary divorce laws, which, on the whole, are in harmony with the *šarī'a*,[27] the female mate is again at a disadvantage. An *adat* for North Tabassaran says that "the husband has the right to divorce his wife at any time... But a wife may abandon her husband only if he is impotent, or if he has a contagious disease, or, finally, if he is unable to support her."[28] The disadvantage lies in the restricted legal grounds justifying the women to abandon their husbands and the almost unlimited possibilities of a justified divorce of the men. However, the expression "at any time" in this *adat* is an exaggeration. If a husband divorces his wife unjustifiably, he must pay the sum promised (*kebin*) and forfeits the *kalym*. If the wife abandons her husband for any other reason than the three grounds enumerated, she loses her right to the *kebin* and her family is obliged to refund the *kalym*.[29] Of course, if the husband is willing to pay the *kebin* and lose his right to a refund of the *kalym*, he may divorce her, literally, at any time.

586, 695 Another occasion for divorce is the so-called *khatun-tallkh*. It is a common form of oath in Daghestan, which only a married man can take. The husband declares himself ready to dismiss his wife if he swear falsely. If he has several wives, he must specify which wife he will dismiss in case of perjury.

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[21] Leontovič, II, p. 173, §§ 150, 152.

[22] Leontovič, II, p. 172, § 143.

[23] Grabovskij, "Ekonomičeskij i domašnij byt, etc.," p. 21.

[24] Leontovič, II, p. 169 f, § 119; p. 176, § 172. The special decision of 1862 in this regard seems to be an imitation of the Islamic *kebin*.

[25] Leontovič, II, p. 175, § 166: "čtoby razvedennaja žena ne byla 'ni ema, ni drugomu.'" See also Grabovskij, *op. cit.*, pp. 51 f.

[26] Grabovskij, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

[27] Kovalevskij, *Zakon*, II, pp. 199 f.

[28] "Adaty Južno-Dagestanskich Obščestv," SSKG, VIII (1875), pp. 32. Kovalevskij, *Zakon*, II, p. 199.

[29] "Adaty Južno-Dagestanskich Obščestv," *l. c.*

4 [among the Northeaste: Caucasians -- Analyst]

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§ 2. PREGNANCY

An expectant mother is no longer an ordinary woman in the eyes of the North Caucasians. She has assumed an entirely new value. The mountaineers of Caucasia look upon a murder of a pregnant woman as doubly serious, pregnancy being considered an aggravating circumstance. Thus in Sirgua District of the Province of Dargwa, the murderer must pay an additional 30 silver rubles to the mother's relatives besides the usual bloodwite for murder.[8] In many places an assault causing abortion is considered as serious as murder, and full bloodwite must be paid for the death of the foetus. If the mother dies too, a double bloodwite is demanded by the *adats*.[9] Or again, two persons will become blood-enemies (*qanly*) instead of one—the murderer and one of his kin—one to atone for the death of the mother and the other for the death of the unborn child.[10] Sometimes such cases are dealt with according to two distinct laws, the Islamic and customary.[11] In Ossetia, a pregnant woman becomes exempt from the more strenuous tasks, evidently, as a precaution against miscarriage.[12]

§ 3. BIRTH AND PREFERENCE FOR BOYS

Since the Caucasians, all without exception, are strictly patrilocal, patriarchal and patrilineal, we need not wonder at the preference for boys that prevails throughout the Caucasus. It is the boy who perpetuates the family economically. He also perpetuates the family cult and gives the family prestige.

The NORTHWESTERN CAUCASIANS say "He who has no sons has no children."[13] But even girls are welcome,[14] though perhaps not without some disappointment. The girls are an asset to the family in as far as they are workers and a source of considerable income especially through the *kalym*. Hence, after the young wife becomes a mother of a boy or girl, she takes on a new character and is proud of becoming "fully a wife." She visits her father after her first child and on this occasion he gives her the rest of her bridal portion. Now she is permitted to take off her girl's cap and put on her matron's veil.[15]

The NORTHEASTERN CAUCASIANS. When an Ingush couple have become the parents of a baby boy there is indescribable rejoicing in the *aul*, and

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[8] "Adaty Darginskich Obščestv," SSKG, VII (1873), p. 73.

[9] "Adaty Južno-Dagestanskich Obščestv," SSKG, VIII (1875), pp. 35, 43, 47, 49.

[10] Cf. "Adaty Južno-Dagestanskich Obščestv," pp. 43, 47, 49.

[11] Cf. "Adaty Darginskich Obščestv," pp. 15, 36, 76. On page 15 we read: "Za ubijstvo beremennoj ženščiny, sverch obyknovennago vzyskanija po adatu, opredeljaetsja vzyskanie po šariatu."

[12] Pčelina, "Rodil'nye obyčai u Osetin," SE, 1937, No. 4, p. 89 ff, who deals with the Ossetine pregnancy customs at length. Many are the questions we might suggest to the Caucasologists regarding pregnancy, which have not yet been investigated. To mention but one important problem: What is the extent om "uncleaness" incurred through pregnancy? (Cf. Eristov, *op. cit.*, p. 114.)

[13] Ladyženskij, FT, p. 202.

[14] Mačavriani, "Nekotorija čerty iz žizni Abchazcev," SMOMPK, IV (1884), No. 2, p. 45.

[15] Pallas, *Bemerkungen auf einer Reise in die südl. Statth. des russ. Reichs, etc.*, I, p. 388.

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842 very special festivities take place. Shooting, feasting, and dancing mark the birth
[844] of a boy; whereas no special festivities take place if a girl is born. Women, of course, come to congratulate the mother, at the same time not forgetting to console her.[16]

[514] All Lesghian peoples prefer boys too. The first one to announce the good news of the birth of a *boy* receives a reward.[17] The Avars have the courious custom according to which anyone to whom a *son* (not however a daughter) was born in the past year has to give a special feast to his neighbours in spring.[18]

The SOUTHERN CAUCASIANS. The Pshavs frequently pray and offer numerous sacrifices for the blessing of a male child, and if these supernatural means fail, there is only one thing left to do—marry a second wife, who is "capable" of giving birth to boys.[19] At a Pshav wedding the *khevis-beri* ("The Elder of the Valley") prays: "George, Angel of the Oak, grant thou a boy to
847 the parents of a girl and another boy to the parents of a boy . . ."[20] Dubrovin reported that among the Georgian mountaineers baby girls were killed immediately after birth because they believed that by doing so the next child would infallibly be a boy. One could come across families who had killed as many as five girls.[21]

The OSSETES have an unusual longing for male children. Thus, for example, the Digorians are greatly disappointed when a girl is born, and this disappointment is expressed sometimes in very irreverent words by the woman-attendant. "May Mairan (Mary) be struck blind for not making you a boy! May she now provide for you a speedy death!" But then, if the following child is a boy, the woman-attendant pleads for forgiveness, "Oh, Mairan, forgive me!
585 They longed for a boy. That is the reason why I scolded thee."[22] We have
842 already mentioned the marriage custom of leading the bride to a Mairem[23] Shrine, at which the children throw stones and say, "So many boys and only one blue-eyed girl grant thou Mairem, to this our dear bride!" The groomsman then must repeat this prayer.[24] At an Ossetine marriage the Ram-god (Firi-dzuar) is invoked: "Look down upon us and grant that this our bride may give birth to boys healthy and fat as sheep!"[25] We have also mentioned the marriage ceremony of placing a little boy on the lap of the bride, so that she may soon give birth to a boy (*supra*, p. 122). Or again, while the groomsman describes a triple

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[16] Grabovskij, "Ekonomičeskij i domašnij byt žitelej gorskago učastka Ingulevskago okruga," SSKG, III (1870), pp. 19 f; Dubrovin, *Istorija*, I, i, p. 439.

[17] Kovalevskij, *Zakon*, II, p. 202.

[18] Baddeley, *op. cit.*, II, p. 63. A similar custom is found in Ossetia (Pčelina, *op. cit.*, pp. 99 f.

[19] Makalatija, "Iz starogo narodnogo byt Pšavov," SE, 1938, No. 1, pp. 110 f.

[20] Makalatija, *op. cit.*, p. 108; Kovalevskij, *Zakon*, I, p. 98.

[21] *Istorija*, I, ii, p. 110.

[22] Baddeley, *op. cit.*, I, p. 158.

[23] Baddeley interprets "Mairam," "Mairem," "Mairan" as "Mary," i. e., the Virgin Mother of Jesus Christ. However, Mairam is a male god, the protector of women, the brother of Uastrdzh. (Cf. Pčelina's report on his expedition of 1934—1936, "Rodil'nye obyčai u Osetin," SE, 1937, No. 4, p. 86, *note* 2.)

[24] Baddeley, *l. c.*

[25] Baddeley, *op. cit.*, I, p. 270.

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circle in the air with his special wedding club he cries out three times, "Prosperity! Prosperity! Prosperity!" Then he explains just what is meant by "prosperity": "nine boys to every blue-eyed girl."[26] On New Year's Day the Ossetine boys go round to everyone wishing, that throughout the New Year "men might kill many stags and women might bear sons only."[27] Cursin tells us how a certain Ossete, Bergisov by name, received a vision from above. Now, in such a case, any two wishes will be granted, provided the person thus favoured make also a third wish, which, however, must be an evil one. Bergisov's good wishes were that he and his sons might live happily, while his third wish was that his daughters might die.[28] The birth of a first-born male child is celebrated with unusually great festivity and joy.[29] The happy mother returns to her father's house, where a special feast is given in honour of the baby boy.[30] After the birth of a girl, the mother goes with the baby to a Shrine of Mairem with the hope that the next child will be a boy.[31]

Some of the Caucasian TARTARS express their preference for boys in the following manner: the bride wears a garment in which nine knots are tied, a sign that she must give birth to seven boys and only two girls. They also have the custom of placing a little boy on the bride's lap.[32]

§ 4. INFANTICIDE AND BIRTH CONTROL

Since Caucasians, as a general rule, crave for children, it is only to be expected that infanticide and birth prevention should be rare. We do not find the practice of infanticide in North Caucasia, especially not in Daghestan, where Islamic influence is strong.[33] Islamism regards female infanticide as a very serious crime. Some of the mountaineers of Georgia indeed practice female infanticide, but the practice is thoroughly un-Georgian. The Svans as late as the last half of the nineteenth century would kill their baby girls immediately after birth by stuffing ashes into the mouth and then throttling the child till it suffocated,[34] or, sometimes, the infant was simply allowed to starve.[35] The Khevsurs prevented birth mainly by abortion, a practice still common today. A young couple in Khevsuria may not have a child till after the fourth year of

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[26] Kovalevskij, *Costume contemp.*, p. 17.

[27] Baddeley, *op. cit.*, I, p. 194.

[28] *Ossetini*, p. 82. *Cf.* Baddeley, *op. cit.*, I, p. 180.

[29] Dubrovin, *Istorija*, I, i, pp. 340 f.

[30] Pčelina, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

[31] Pčelina, *op. cit.*, p. 102. If a girl is born, only a very simple ceremony takes place: the *avsin* (mother of the household) brings the infant to the hearth without saying a word. (See Pčelina, *op. cit.*, p. 99.)

[32] Mir-Galim-bek Vezirov, "Neskolko svědenij o Tatarskich pover'jach," SMOMPK, IX (1890), No. 2, pp. 111 f.

[33] Kovalevskij, *Zakon*, II, p. 202.

[34] Byhan, *La civilisation caucasienne*, p. 111; Dubrovin, *Istorija*, I, ii, p. 110.

[35] Dubrovin, *l. c.*

855 total want of manliness. On one occasion, stung by the jeers of the men in
593 his native regiment, he drew his 'kinjal' and crying: 'I love my son, but you shall see also that I don't mind killing him', was about to do so when they seized his arm and succeeded in calming him."[107] A better example to illustrate the necessary distinction between love and public manifestation of that love we can hardly offer. "I love my son, but you shall see also that I don't mind killing him!" A paradox which a Western mind finds very difficult to grasp![108]

The neighbouring SOUTHERN CAUCASIANS, the Khevsurs, have the same taboo. A father may never carry his child before others or even say a friendly word to it. The most that the father may do is hold the child by hand when it is old enough to walk.[109a]

The neighbouring OSSETES observe the same rule. Here too it is not a lack of affection but a convention, which under no condition may be violated. "Neither husband nor wife might take their children in their arms, or by hand, or give them anything, in the presence of older members of his family. 'So far is this carried,' said Ourousbi [the Author's guide, an Ossete] 'that once one of my children fell into the water and might have been drowned, but as older men of the family were present I did not dare to call attention to the fact, much less take the child out of the water myself. Luckily one of them saw what was happening and saved it.'"[109] "So, too, Kosta Khetagouroff, the Ossetine poet, saved a child from falling off a high house-roof by stamping on its garments, but called a woman to pick it up as it would have been against custom for him to do so; and one of the Abayeffs, having in identical circumstances saved a child, called to its mother—his own wife—'Here, come and pick up your puppy!' (Čursin, *Osetini*, p. 40)." Baddeley claims that in this respect a change has taken place, and as proof, points out that in several of his own photographs Ourousbi is seen carrying a friend's baby. But here Baddeley forgets that the prohibition is not to carry a *friend's* baby but to carry *one's own* child.

§ 10. CONCLUSIONS

● 842 We have already mentioned the main reason why boys are preferred to
628 girls, namely the patriarchal, patrilocal, and patrilineal structure of the North Caucasian and neighbouring societies. But there is still another reason, based on intertribal relations and on the poverty of the mountain tribes, which leads them to a life of raids and robbery. The Caucasus is a typical land of blood-feuds. In the Terek Province, for example, with a population of about 930,000, there were in one year 365 cases of homicide or attempted homicide, an average of one a day. Feuds accounted for most of them.[110] The rest were the result

[107] Baddeley, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 87 f.

[108] Cf. Dubrovin, I, i, p. 440.

[109a] Hahn, *Bilder aus dem Kaukasus*, p. 81. For the practice in the Government of Elizabethpol, see E. Melik-Šachnazarov, "Selenie Arcevanik, Zangezurskago uězda, Elisavetpol'skoj Gubernii," SMOMPK, XXV (1898), No. 2, p. 43.

[109] Baddeley, *op. cit.*, I, p. 269, from whom we borrow also the following citation of Čursin.

[110] Baddeley, *op. cit.*, I, p. 81.

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of raids and robberies. Girls are useless in these tasks, whereas, in this struggle for existence, every additional boy means greater security and prestige.

In conclusion, we may ask ourselves, just why should the *adats* prohibit the manifestation of one's affection for a child. The reason behind this customary law seems to be founded not so much on a father-child relation as on the male-female relation of the Caucasian society. If a father were to show his affection for his child, were he to fondle and carry it, he would be imitating a *woman*, and that would be a terrible degradation! This degradation will be better understood in the following chapter. This rule to my mind is linked up with the low position of the female sex. Just as a man may never do a task that is established by the *adats* as a task exclusively for women, e. g., milk cows, fetch water, gather wood, so a man may never carry, fondle, or rock his child. Ćursin seems to be of the same opinion. He says that the Ossetes would call such a man by a very insulting name, "baba," that is, "old lady," if he would ever dare to milk a cow or look after children.[111] We wish to stress two facts: first of all, it is not a lack of affection for one's child that is prohibited, as we have said, but the *manifestation* of that love; and secondly, the manifestation of love is forbidden simply out of fear of being considered an "old lady," a woman!

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[111] G. F. Ćursin, *Osetini, etnografičeskij očerk*, p. 39.

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(5) and the *patria potestas*[15] in the extreme form as found in North Caucasia are all typically pastoral nomadic.

(6) The father alone has the *right to choose a mate* for his children, and boys are given more consideration in the choice than the girls.[16]

(7) The *bride price*, though found in other cultures also, has a typically pastoral colouring in the Caucasus, since it is measured mainly in cattle and horses.[17] Bride wealth as a *price* in the strict sense of the word is found almost exclusively among pastoral peoples.[18]

(8) *Bride stealing*[19] is a common practice among pastoral nomads. All Turco-Tartars, Indo-Europeans, and the Semites have or at least have had frequent recourse to marriage by capture.

(9) The various *engagement prohibitions*,[20]

(10) the segregation of the bride in a special hut *(amhara)*, the obligation of the young man to cover his entire head and face except for an opening for his eyes,[21] the obligation of the bride and groom to hide during the wedding,[22] the bride's veiling, taciturnity, resistence, the post-nuptial obligation of the couple not to appear together before their parents or older brethren,[23] all these customary laws are in no way a vestige of former group marriage, fraternal polyandry, bride capture and the like, as we have sufficiently refuted above, but they are most likely an expression of the *extreme modesty peculiar to pastoral peoples*, a reaction to the "great change" from single to married life, more strongly felt among pastoral nomads than any other peoples.

(11) It is the *male side who proposes to the female and not vice versa*,[24] likewise a phenomenon found infallibly among pastoral nomads.

(12) The *great longing for children, especially for boys*,[25] although found in other cultures, reaches its highest point among pastoral nomads. Connected with this craving after male children is the custom of marrying a second wife in case the first is sterile or "unable" to bear male offspring.

(13) The *wedding customs*[26] are typically pastoral nomadic in character: dramatization of bride capture, horse-racing, the proof of virginity with subsequent rejoicing if the bride is found "chaste," or mutilation and execution if found "unchaste," the special ceremonies and wishes for fertility, especially for the birth of many male children, the triple encircling of the fireplace, etc. are all typically pastoral nomadic.

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[15] *Supra*, pp. 183—186.
[16] *Supra*, pp. 76—81.
[17] *Supra*, pp. 82—91.
[18] *Supra*, p. 91.
[19] *Supra*, pp. 91—96.
[20] *Supra*, pp. 106—110.
[21] Seidlitz, "Die Abchasen," *Globus*, LXVI (1894), p. 40.
[22] *Supra*, p. 124.
[23] *Supra*, p. 166. For similar customs among the ancient Indo-Europeans see *infra*, p. 198.
[24] *Supra*, pp. 100—106.
[25] *Supra*, pp. 124, 139 ff.
[26] *Supra*, pp. 125—128, especially Table 16

† [i.e. a trait found among the Caucasians--Analyst]